

## County of Santa Clara Department of Child Support Services



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CSFC DCSS01 081606

DATE: August 16, 2006

TO: Supervisor James T. Beall, Jr., Chairperson  
Supervisor Don Gage, Vice-Chairperson  
Children, Seniors & Families Committee

FROM:   
Ralph Miller  
Director

SUBJECT: Report Back on Emancipated Foster Youth Employment Project within the  
Department of Child Support Services.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Accept status report from Department of Child Support Services on the Emancipated Foster Youth Employment Project.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

Acceptance of this report will have no impact on the County general fund.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

This report is submitted in response to request from the Committee for information related to the Emancipated Foster Youth Employment Project within the Department of Child Support Services.

## **BACKGROUND**

In the State of the County Address delivered on January 25, 2006, Supervisor Beall, Chairman of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, urged the establishment of bold goals and new initiatives to provide hope and alternatives for people in our community. Supervisor Beall then introduced a number of initiatives, focusing on health care for uninsured residents, a long-term commitment to the environment, and the numerous challenges facing emancipated foster youth. It is the latter area of concern that resonated with the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS), resulting in an initiative to employ these young people during the waning months of FY 2006.

Historically, the Department has not made great use of extra help, focusing on filling positions and conducting business with permanent, full time staff. This continues to be the Department's goal but four years of flat-line budgeting and the inability to match increased costs with additional revenue has resulted in salary savings plans and reduction in force through (primarily) attrition. As a result, many positions have been deleted and others remain vacant. These circumstances, while not ideal, provided an opportunity to fund extra help positions during the last 4 months of FY 2006 and a decision was made to focus on the hiring of emancipated foster youth.

Working with the County of Santa Clara Employee Services and Social Services Agencies, an Employment Opportunity announcement was prepared to aide in the recruitment effort (see attached). Additional targeted outreach was conducted and a pool of 41 young people was identified as potential candidates for employment. Of this number, 30 were eventually hired by DCSS with the initial contingent of 19 arriving on March 13, 2006. Over the course of the Project, four individuals were released due to attendance issues and one left voluntarily. A total of 25 completed the term of employment in late June and, of these, 11 were retained beyond the original end date with a current projected end date of 8/31/06.

The majority of emancipated foster youth performed functions associated with the Office Specialist I classification. Duties included customer contact, message retrieval, document filing, case folder creation, mail handling, basic data entry, and other miscellaneous entry level clerical functions. Work performed on this Project significantly enhanced the ability of the Department to meet Program compliance requirements and address existing backlogs while providing opportunities to be trained and gain experience as part of the County extra help workforce.

Project participants commented on their experiences as follows:

This was a wonderful opportunity for us and I hope to advance and stay with the County. Thank you for giving me this opportunity. I learned so much and enjoyed it very much. It was an unforgettable learning experience. I feel great to be here. I enjoyed this opportunity to work for the County and learned a lot from the job.

Emancipated Foster Youth worked a total of 11,682 hours during the period of March 13, 2006 – July 30, 2006. They were paid a total of \$228,391. The experience, according to participants and DCSS staff, was extremely positive.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

This Committee will not have requested information related to the Emancipated Foster Youth Employment Project experience within the Department of Child Support Services.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Employment Opportunity Flyer